

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH 1. 18.

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ON POVERTY.

The Treasures of the world are the gift of God, and few blessings of his providence are more desirable. To possess a noble disposition and an extensive fortune, is to possess the desire and the power of doing good ; and the highest honours which men can merit belong to the high minded and liberal among the opulent.

Poverty is no reproach ; but it is an evil, and an evil of a bitter nature. A virtuous man may dread it. *I am poor*, says the psalmist, and he adds, *I am sorrowful*. But if sadness attends on poverty, blessings follow the wounds of melancholy ; and a bruised spirit will be borne up by the salvation of God. Since the misfortunes of life are sources of moral discipline, poverty is at once an evil, which must be supported, and a calamity which must be improved.

Men can support it, since they voluntarily bring upon themselves many heavier afflictions.

It is better to be poor, than to be wealthy, and yet ignorant of the use of wealth. A man may receive treasures with every harvest or with every wind ; yet he will be none the happier, unless he grow familiar with virtue, and make charity the steward of his possessions.

It is better to be poor than to be peevish ; for an indigent man may find delight in life, but to the querulous and petulant no enjoyment proves satisfactory, no form seems gracefully moulded, no ray of light preserves its true brilliancy.

It is better to be poor than to be friendless. The comforts of life can be spared, if the good feelings of the heart, abound. Friends, no less than dutiful sons, are as well made arrows, fitted to defend and to pierce ; and happy is he who bears a quiver full of them. To be denied the counsel of men whom we honour, is worse than to need a home ; and a reverse in friendship is more terrible than a reverse in fortune.

Poverty is an evil of this life only ; it is therefore infinitely less fearful than vice ; for vice is a disorder of the understanding and heart, and poverty is a mere temporal disadvantage. Poverty is an evil of this short life ; vice is an evil of eternity.

Let us consider then more closely the nature of poverty. The terrors which are gathered a-

round misfortune often vanish on examination ; and I believe we may so familiarize ourselves with the haggard mien, and wretched apparel of want, as to find her countenance tranquilized by contentment and bright with cheerfulness.

The evil is brief in its duration. We suffer only for a short season from the pains of our bodies. Childhood protects itself by its own inexhaustible sources of gaiety. The hand of poverty can never wound the young, for however heavily it may fall, the Father of Mercies has shielded them by their own internal tranquility and careless cheerfulness. And when we do come to recognise the power and the train of want, we have grown old enough to resist and support it. The grave too, which is not far from any one of us, is a sure refuge for the needy ; the earth, from whence we come, will yet suffer us to repose on her lap ;—and what desire, or what suffering, or what necessity can violate the repose of that general resting place ? Towards that resting place we are hastening, and we shall soon be received there ; the hours may roll slowly and wearily, yet they roll onwards ; the sands of life are incessantly ebbing ; time grows short ; and whether it be from sorrow or from pleasure, from want or from abundance, the division of death is at hand.

But death is only a refuge from want. Its remedy is labour. If prudent counsels and patient industry come from men, good fortune will follow from heaven. The son of the righteous never yet came to want, unless he had first forgotten the instruction of his father. How honourable is it to triumph over indigence by private exertion ! How truly independent is he, who owes his sustenance to nothing but his own hands, under the blessings of his own God ? Poverty has lost half its terror, now that I know, we have a refuge from it, and a remedy for it ; and that it affects neither independence nor honour. I now think it may be borne, with all the sufferings which it threatens. But what are the mighty evils which it inflicts ? It certainly diminishes the comforts of life ; but should the soul be much dejected, because its partner fares poorly ? Can coarse food and coarse raiment injure the mind ? And if contumely should follow want, cannot the understanding support reproach, and the consciousness of rectitude condemn it ? It is childish, petulant, and unworthy of an immortal spirit to

find the hardships of poverty so heavy. The fear that we should not be able to supply the wants of those who depend on us, is not the worst fear; we dread still more a division from those we love; the chill of winter to those who have poor raiment and a scanty fire, is piercing enough, but the cold wind of ingratitude blows with more bitter vehemence, and it is the rich who are exposed to that blast. Let us say no more of the personal inconveniences of poverty. It is an outrage on the nature of virtue to suppose, that the quality of food, the splendour of dress, or any mere personal advantages and comforts can interfere with the discharge of duty. Does poverty limit the power of exertion? Does it interfere with the discharge of the offices of life? It rather adds energy to resolution, and new courage to enterprise; it teaches to endure, and it excites to improve; it supports the strength of man in the hour of performance, and the proverb tells us, it is the mother of invention.

But the worst effect of poverty is to limit the means of intellectual improvement. The aspiration after excellence, common to every ingenuous mind, can, if counteracted by the deficiency of fortune, easily produce an agitation of spirits as dismal as insanity.

But has the hopelessness, produced by want, repressed and broken minds of a higher order, more frequently than luxury and wealth have corrupted their energy by indolence? Philosophers have ever shewn a predilection for the humble; and if we recount the names of the departed spirits, who when on earth rested most familiarly on the bosom of science, wisdom will almost seem to have selected her associates from among the poor alone. When we reflect on the lives of those, who have guided the public mind and controlled the events of time, we learn how frequently poverty has fortified and chastened the character of genius. Can want repress aspirations after intellectual excellence? Can want diminish the energy of the mind or dry up the springs of invention? Can the poet move the more freely through the bright heaven of thought, if borne up on the wings of wealth? Or is it that there are no pinions, which rise so heavily and flag so speedily as they?

Even in the public life where wealth would seem to pave the way readily to distinction, many of those, whose names are repeated among the nations with reverence and love, have been familiar with poverty. The rights of mankind have been asserted by the poor; the poor bore onward to its triumph the gospel of Christ. And who in modern times have changed the whole aspect of history and religion? Was it the rich with their treasures? the warriors with their armies? the princes with the revenue of nations at their command? No! A new epoch was established, a new world was discovered, by a poor fisherman of

Genoa; and a mendicant monk was the reformer of the Christian Church.

Poverty cannot then be so great an evil. It neither bars the way to usefulness nor honour; and however much it may detract from sensual pleasures, it does not interfere with the highest objects of existence. If men have dreaded it, as a demon attended by despair and misery, it does them no honour to have trembled so timidly before so impotent an adversary.

We have thus far spoken of poverty as an evil which tries men's souls; as an evil to be avoided, to be resisted, to be endured.

Poverty may assist in forming the character to virtue.

And here I especially entreat the patient attention of the rich; for every moral quality, incumbent on the poor, has its corresponding obligation for them. If contentment is a duty, even to the wretched, let the rich bear in mind, that they are the ministers in God's hands for relieving distress; and if gratitude is due from the needy to their benefactors, let the rich make the duty easy by conferring benefits with kindness. The spirit of true benevolence is winning. She is gentle, affectionate, and soothing; she distributes her alms with humility and pity; heaven smiles on her loveliness, and men remember her with gratitude. Hence it is even prudent to assist a virtuous man, who is struggling against poverty. A small treasure cannot be better invested. A benefit thus conferred is a fund well husbanded.

God has blessed the poor with the riches of infinite love. The gospel is emphatically theirs; and he who made us, is the shepherd of the needy, the Father of orphans, and the avenger of the widow's wrongs.

It is amidst the hardships of life, that the will nerves itself with its perfect vigour. The mother of the earliest of heroes is said to have immersed him in the river of death, that she might make him invulnerable to earthly weapons; and the fable relates, that the father of virtue committed to adversity the early education of his darling child.

There is indeed one point, in which the opulent have a superiority. It is better to give than to receive. The Father of mercies gives, but does not receive; and so a rich man may multiply his deeds of charity, and like the Lord our God require nothing in return.

The poor cannot practise active benevolence; yet they can on the other hand gain the virtues of contentment and resignation. The example of the great Apostle teaches us in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content. Disquietude about ourselves would be pusillanimous; and as to the good we would do to others, we must be resigned to the limits which are set us. God will accept benevolent feelings and good desires.—

The angels and the elements and all beings are his ministers ; if we are employed but little in his service, we should not despond, but submit ourselves to his will, remembering, that they who stand at his altar in readiness to obey, will be honoured no less than those who speed at his bidding.

But the poor not only cannot exercise charity ; they receive benefactions. Let them cherish then the virtue of gratitude. All the blessings of life come from God ; but come to us through different channels. They may be inherited ; and then a peaceful recollection of the virtues of the departed may sanctify their use. Or a sufficiency may be acquired by private industry, and this is praiseworthy, if the desire of gain does not injure integrity. Or the bounties of heaven may be communicated through the hands of benevolent fellow men ; and to receive them thus is the privilege of the poor. The poor do receive benefactions from the rich. Men are not so selfish, as in moments of despondency we are apt to believe. Benevolence does dwell among them. The fire of charity was kindled at the creation of man, and though it may sometimes have burnt dimly, it has never been extinguished. It is an eternal fire, and it never will be extinguished. Benevolence does its office cheerfully even where the result is uncertain ; and he, who in youth aspires after knowledge, even though struggling against necessity, may hope, that a benefactor will appear to raise him above the influence of narrow means, and wish him good speed in his journey through life.

But what if contumely were to follow charity ? What if a benefactor should become an enemy ? What if he who gives, should follow his gifts with reproach and insult ? Alas, then the poor man must suffer with meekness. He must learn to be independent, but he must learn to endure. He must respect himself, but he must quell the spirit of resentment. And he will remember, that there is a kind and gentle power above him and around him, who chastises without insult, reproves without reproach, blesses without return, and heals the wounds of poverty with the riches of parental love.

The state of mind, thus produced, will encourage a willingness to acknowledge the benevolence of Heaven. Poverty promotes gratitude to God, and trust in his Providence. It is the rich, who in the midst of abundance forget the Author of good. They, who repose in the delightful gardens of plenty, and enjoy the refreshing shadow of the trees of God, hardly remember the kind being, who adorned our planet so pleasantly ; while the pilgrim, who is lost in the desert, where no tree can flourish, and the flower of hope can hardly blossom, grows warm with gratitude as he shelters himself beneath what the prophet so sublimely calls "the shadow of a great rock in a wea-

ry land " The shipwrecked mariner, who has neither fire nor water, knows the value of the elements, and receives a few drops of rain with thanksgiving ; but we hardly deem the enjoyment of pure air and wholesome water a cause for praise ; and they for whom the streams of prosperity pour most copiously, forget that the sources of all good are in Heaven.

The heart of the poor man turns gratefully to God. He becomes weaned from the world. His treasures are on high. His best hope is in immortality. To the opulent the grave may seem an enemy ; to the poor it is a strong fortress against suffering.

The grave is the shelter of poverty. They who have no place of refuge, will soon find one there. Amidst all distress and humiliation they must remember, that they still have a country, where their names may be written foremost on the lists of citizenship. I speak of the city of God, where gold is not honoured, and where treasures are not gathered ; the city of God, which is indeed a spiritual city ; but if we will have images for our hopes, it is the city where the palm will be given to patient sufferers, and the amaranth be woven into garlands for those, who have been purified by affliction.

Thus it is that poverty reminds us of the instability of every thing in this world, and of the certainty of every thing in another. Bearing this in mind, can we not learn to support what the apostles endured before us, and what the Saviour of men endured before them ? Is there any man so poor that he has no home ? Jesus never had a home on earth. Is there any man so poor, that he has no shelter for the night ? Though the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, Jesus had not where to lay his head. Is there any man so poor, that he cannot feel with his country ? Had Jesus a country ? Was it Bethlehem, where they would have slain his infancy, or Egypt which was but his place of refuge, or Jerusalem where they crucified him ? Jesus had no country. Or, since the regard for the body still clings to every one, is there any man so poor that he fears his remains can never be decently interred but by the pity of strangers ? Jesus was indebted to charity for a sepulchre.

Let the poor man apply the example of Jesus to his own condition. Let him join to his poverty integrity. Oh ! how humble should he then be before God ; oh ! how proud may he then be before men. He will find poverty an evil easily supported, and will be persuaded, as I hope we are all now persuaded, that knowledge is better than opulence ; that wealth is of no value without virtue ; that a man may be very poor and very happy.

Unitarian Miscellany.

From the Philadelphia Reformer.

Established Clergy of England.

Extracts from "The Black Book; or, Corruption Unmasked."

"The Christian religion, in its purity, is the cheapest and least ostentatious religion that ever was promulgated; requiring no parade, altars, incense, sacrifice, nor expense of any kind.—These are the inventions of state, craft, avarice, and pride. The Church of England has rendered the whole a purely mechanical operation. All her service is written; no extempore preaching or praying; it requires no mind,—merely to be able to read or repeat: a child might perform the service for which individuals receive out of the pockets of the industrious, 10, 15, or 20,000 pounds per annum.

"To perform such a puerile and heartless ceremony, it can hardly excite surprise that the majority of the clergy conceive it unnecessary to reside on their benefices. Of the violation of the law in this respect, of the penalties they incurred by this violation, and of the law passed to screen the delinquents by our virtuous and consistent representatives we are now going to speak. We have already mentioned the statute of Henry VIII. imposing penalties on parochial ministers absenting themselves for one month together from their benefices.

"The penalties of this act were repealed, and others substituted in their place, by 43 Geo. III. c. 84. This Act provides, that every spiritual person possessed of any archdeaconry, deanery, or other dignity, benefice, donative or perpetual curacy, &c. who shall (without some particular cause, specified in the statute of Henry VIII.) wilfully absent himself therefrom for three months together; or, at several times in any one year, and make his residence elsewhere, except at some other dignity, &c. whereof he is possessed, shall, if such absence exceed three and be under six months, forfeit one third of the annual value (clear of all outgoings except any stipend paid to a curate) of such dignity wherefrom he shall so absent himself; if the absence exceed six months and be under eight, one half; if it exceed eight and be under twelve, two-thirds; and if it exceed twelve months, three-fourths of such annual value; to be recovered by action of debt by any person suing for the same.

"Such then was the law introduced by Sir William Scott, and solemnly enacted in the year 1803 by King, Lords, and Commons. In the year 1811, Mr. Wright commenced nearly 200 different actions against the incumbents in the dioceses of London, Ely and Norwich, to recover the penalties under the act of the 43d. This gentleman had been secretary to four right reverend bishops—the bishops of London, Norwich, Ely, and some other prelate—and of course had enjoyed the most ample opportunities for procuring correct information of the conduct of the clergy. These opportunities appear not to have been thrown away on Mr. Wright. In a series of letters published in the *Morning Chronicle*, betwixt the 6th of Nov. 1813, and the 11th of March 1814, he favoured the public with many curious disclosures which had come to his knowledge during the discharge of his official duties.

"In his letter of Nov. 20th, he says that he has selected from well-authenticated documents, 10,801 benefices on which there are only 4,490 incumbents, even said to be resident, so that there 6,311 confessedly non-resident in incumbents;* to supply whose places 1523 resident curates are

employed, which leaves 4788, which are acknowledged to have neither a resident curate nor incumbent.

"In one diocese, he says, one-third of the livings have had duty reduced from twice to once on a Sunday; and in another diocese, one-third of the parsonage-houses were returned in bad repair, as an excuse for non-residence. Speaking of the *false pretences* made use of by the clergy, in order to avoid residing among their parishioners, and the scandalous lives they lead, he says,

"Now ill health of the incumbent himself, or his wife, or daughter, is a *common pretext*, when no other *legal* cause can be found of avoiding residence. Of twenty-two licenses granted in one diocese for this reason, three only of the persons are in a state of health to warrant it, and the benefices from which they so absent themselves are very valuable. Whether the ministers whom I thus challenge as using *false pretences* deserve the imputation, will best appear by the mode of life they adopt. Some live in town during the winter; and although night air certainly cannot benefit a valetudinarian, they may be constantly seen at card parties, routs, or the theatre. In summer, enjoying the amusements of fashionable watering places; whilst, too often, their curates, by the parsimonious stipend they afford them, are with a numerous family in a state of the greatest poverty. Others have beneficial schools in the neighborhood of London.—Others are continually to be met with near their residence in more pleasant parts of the country, *enjoying the sports of the field, or vigorously endeavouring to detect some poor countryman who may have an unfortunate inclination to taste game!*—Others may be seen most days driving their own carriage! and all, to observers, seem *perfectly healthful*; yet a certificate from a medical man is deposited with the bishop that they are not so; probably it is six or eight years before when there might have existed a degree of temporary ill health, but after the cause ceases the same plea is continued; and a license once granted, is renewed as a matter of course.—Lett. VI. January 6th, 1814.

"Very good, Mr. Wright. Thus we see how these reverend gentlemen are employed; not in administering spiritual instruction to the ignorant, comfort to the afflicted, or clothing to the naked. Oh! no—these are ignoble pursuits, the mere theory of the profession. They pretend sickness, in order to obtain a license for non-residence, that they may bawl at the card-table, frequent the play-house, hunt, shoot, brandish the coachman's whip, and bully at fashionable watering places. Remember, these jovial spirits are all filled with the Holy Ghost—empowered to forgive or not to forgive sins—have the cure of souls; that their poor curates are starving on a wretched stipend, and that, in the maintenance of both, the industrious are robbed of the fruits of their labour, and the necessary comforts of their families wasted in the profligate and dissipated lives of their parochial ministers.

"The number of those (says Mr. Wright, Lett. II.) who have neglected their duty in contempt of the law, and in direct violation of *solemn oath and bond*, are far more than can be contemplated without a considerable degree of alarm. One vicar obtained a license from a bishop for non-residence on one living, stating that he was going to reside near another in a different part of the kingdom. On inquiring for him at the place where he was supposed to reside, he was gone to a more *fashionable part of the country*. On another, to 'encourage him,' the great tithes were settled, worth near 1200*l.*: when he was instituted he *took an oath to reside*, which he afterwards neglected to observe. A Rector, holding two valuable rectories worth 1200*l.* per annum, to obtain which he gave bond to the archbishop that he would constantly reside on one, and keep a resident curate on the other, himself preaching on the benefice where he did not reside thirteen sermons every year: this worthy son of the Church contrived to evade these conditions, and got a poor curate to do the work of both livings for 84*l.* a year. Another Rector holding two livings, one

* Perhaps it is unnecessary to explain the difference betwixt Resident and Non-Resident Incumbents. The former are those who reside on their benefices, and at least perform some part of the duty for which they are paid; the latter do not reside on their benefices at all, and receive pay without performing any duty—they are clerical sinecurists, who perform the little duty that is performed by deputy.

worth 500*l.* the other 400*l.*—he lived 200 miles off, and had not been resident nor licensed curate.

On the subject of *pluralism* (parsons holding more than one living) and of non-residence together, the Secretary to four Bishops says, (Lett. V.) ‘In one diocese there are about 216 clergymen, who each hold *two* livings; 40 who hold *three* each; 13 who hold *four* each; one who holds *five*; 1 who holds *six*; besides *dignities* and *offices*: and although many of these thus accounted *single* benefices are two, three, four, or five parishes *consolidated*, yet a great part of these Pluralists do not reside in any of their preferences.’ In Lett. VII. he says, ‘I will prove that there are Pluralists holding more than *seven* benefices and dignities.

‘These different statements of Mr. Wright are fully supported by the Diocesan Returns laid before the Privy Council, and ordered by the House of Commons to be printed. From these returns in the years 1809, 1810, and 1811, Mr. Bentham has inserted an abstract in his *Church of Englandism*. This abstract will show at once the state of Church discipline when the Diocesan Secretary was arrested in his attempt to bring the delinquents to justice.

‘According to Mr. Wright, **Want or Unfitness of Parsonage-house*, is a common pretence for obtaining a license for non-residence. In Lett. II. he says, ‘In one diocese, *one-third* of the parsonage-houses are returned in bad repair.’ In 1811, more than one thousand, or about *one-tenth* of the whole number of parsonage-houses in the kingdom were returned, as an excuse for non-residence; or, in other words, to obtain a license to desert their parishes, and roam about the country in quest of more lively amusements than christening, burying, and spiritually instructing their parishioners.

‘Such then was the state of Church Discipline, as exhibited by official documents, and the averments of Mr. Wright, when that gentleman commenced his actions against the Clergy. We have stated, that the number of actions amounted to about 200; and had Mr. Wright been suffered to recover, the penalties would have amounted to 30,000*l.* To this sum he had an indisputable claim; a claim as sacred as any person can have to an estate devised by will, or on a mortgage, or any other legal security: his claim had been guaranteed to him by a solemn act of the Legislature. Nay more, this claim appeared to be rendered still more sacred, by Sir William Scott being the author of the act of the 43*d.* Sir William, it is well known, is considered nearly infallible in matters relative to the Church, as his brother is in matters relative to the State: he is the corner-stone of the Temple, whom, if the Bishops have not filled with the Holy Ghost, have at least filled with the political piety of the Borough System; that is with that peculiar religion of the Church of England, which so perverts the intellectual vision, that it is impossible for those blinded by its influence, to see any vice in a system which loads individuals with wealth and a nation with misery.

‘It is not of much consequence what were the motives of Mr. Wright for coming forward in this business. It appears he had been very basely treated by the Right Reverend Bishops; and it was to indemnify himself for losses sustained in their service, that he endeavoured to recover the penalties to which the Clergy had become liable by the criminal connivance and neglect of the Bishops. In Lett. I. (*Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 13, 1813,) he says, ‘At a Committee of Bishops, after a *deliberation of nearly two years*, it was decided that each Bishop should give his Secretary an annual sum of money. I have received it from *not one* of them, except my late lamented patron, the Bishop of London.’—‘Commisseration may have been given, (Lett. VII.) but it was all I ever received from any one, and that would have been unnecessary, if the sums had been paid which were acknowledged to be my due.’—‘Two Secretaries have, within the last ten years, fallen victims to depression of mind, arising from a want of sufficient income.’

‘Most merciful Bishops! most christian Bishops! What

not pay your poor Secretaries their stipends! drive two of them to despair by your barbarous avarice! Surely you might have spared them odd hundreds, out of your 10, 15, or 20,000 pounds per annum. But you are right reverend fathers, you can lisp about charity, turn up your eyes, talk about treasures in heaven, but *your* treasures are all in this world; there your hearts are fixed upon translations, pluralisms, fat livings, and church patronage.

‘These however are private anecdotes betwixt Mr. Wright and his right reverend employers. Let us speak to the public part of the question. It is clear, from what has been said, that Mr. Wright was in possession of valuable information; he had resided in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the Temple, and was intimately acquainted with the secret management of the Holy Church. The Clergy were terribly alarmed at his disclosures: they resorted to every artifice to avert the storm, and save their pockets: clubs were formed among the higher orders of ecclesiastics: lies and calumnies of every shape and description were vomited forth to blacken the character of Mr. Wright; he was stigmatised as an ‘*informer*,’ who availing himself of his official situation, was in part the cause of, and then the betrayer of their guilt. In short, he became exposed to the whole storm of priestly cunning, malignity, and fury. But facts are stubborn things; and this gentleman had secured too firm a hold of his object to lose his grasp by the wiles and malice of the Church. Their guilt was unquestionable; there was no chance of escape from the verdict of a jury; but that protection which it was in vain to expect from an English Court of Justice, they found in the great sanctuary of delinquency, an English House of Commons.

‘On the 17th Nov. 1813, Bragge Bathurst brought in a Bill to stay all legal proceedings against the Clergy on account of the penalties they had incurred under the Act of the 43*d.* This Bill shortly after passed into a law, almost without opposition. The Whigs were silent. Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Brand indeed said something about the absurdity of enacting laws one day, and abrogating them the next; of the injustice of tempting people by rewards, and after they had earned them, interfering to prevent their being granted. But this was all. These gentlemen agreed it was necessary to protect the Clergy; and, with the exception of Lord Folkestone, we do not find, in Hansard’s History of the Debates, a single individual who raised his voice against the principle of this nefarious transaction.

‘During the progress of the Bill, Mr. Wright presented several petitions in vindication of his claim to the penalties, and of his character and motives from the slanders of the Clergy. In his petition of the 21st April, (Parl. Deb. vol. xxvii. p. 462,) he declares, that the representations made by the Clergy of his having entrapped them, and nourished their offences, and of having kept back their licenses and notifications, are wholly without foundation: so far from which, the petitioner had, at great trouble and expense prepared abstracts of the different statutes in force relative to residence and license, and caused them to be printed and distributed, gratis, among the Clergy, that they might not be ignorant of the penalties they were liable to by their practices. He also complains of clubs and associations formed among the Clergy; of their having commenced friendly actions against themselves; and of having consulted counsel, whether they could not avoid the penalties to which they were liable by a sham resignation of their benefices, and then retaking them: all which the petitioner said were intended to abridge him of the legal rights vested in him by the Legislature.

‘After this petition the public heard nothing more of Mr. Wright. The Parsons’ Indemnity Bill passed into a law, and the Church received a complete white-washing from the State for all its manifold sins and transgressions.

‘After the passing of the Restriction Act, Gagging Bills, Seditious Meeting Bills, and of the Habeas Corpus Sus-

pension Bills, it can hardly excite surprise that a Bill passed to indemnify the Clergy. In the latter case, however, there appears something more unprincipled and contemptible than in the former unconstitutional measures. The law imposing the penalties which Mr. Wright attempted to recover had only been enacted in 1803; the professed object was to remedy the crying evil of non-residence; and to give greater encouragement to prosecutions, the Act provided that the whole of the penalties were to be given to the informer. Only eight years elapse, an informer comes forward, relying on the faith of Parliament; prosecutions are commenced; when the Legislature interferes—in utter contempt of justice and consistency—belying its former professions, violating its pledge, robbing an individual of his reward, and screens the delinquents which its own laws had made liable to punishment. Laws, it is clear, are not made to principles, but to men, and are only terrible to the weak, and not to the wicked."

FOR THE RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

PREJUDICE.

Among all the snares of vice, which are injurious to the felicity of man, nothing ranks higher than prejudice. It is that which sours the sweets of domestic life, extinguishes the light of knowledge, intercepts the glimmering rays of reason in the tender mind, and chills the growing affections which vegetate in the garden of benevolence. This Hydra, this monster with many heads, measurably infests every son and daughter of Adam's nature, and its terrific din drowns the still small voice of reason and common sense, from the ferocious Boshesman of Africa, to the amiable native of Pelew; from the ignorant Hindoo devotee, to the enlightened disciple of Immanuel. After we become prepossessed, either for, or against, any object within our knowledge, how difficult it is for us to elude this grasp of prejudice! It adheres to us, and like the encircling mistletoe, pierces our very natures, and gradually deadens the heart on which it feeds.

Our prejudices for those things with which we were familiar in youth are evident. The house, the garden, the fields, the rivulets, the hills and valleys, where we have been accustomed to roam in our youthful days, are strongly impressed on our minds, and a remembrance of them generally attends us through all the changing scenes of life; yea, it never leaves us until our bodies are mingled with the clod of the valley. Those prejudices which we receive in youth, are generally the most difficult to be eradicated, and those springing from nothing, grow into jealousy; hence hatred occurs, and murder closes the horrid scene. It was prejudice grown to jealousy, which prompted the ten sons of Jacob privately to dispose of their younger brother; although their fell purpose was overruled by an almighty hand. It was prejudice, which caused the Jewish populace to call for Barabbas instead of Jesus, which caused them to worship their God with lip service, while they set aside judgment, mercy, and the love of God. These prejudices, which were attendant on the Jewish nation, have been, (together with many others borrowed from heathen mythology,) handed down to succeeding generations. Being possessed with the idea of the eternal wrath of Jehovah, the zealous advocates of such a God, not willing to wait patiently for his vengeance on their opposers; but being anxious to give their enemies a foretaste of the supposed miseries awaiting them, introduced the crusades; carnage and blood ensued, and the crimsoned fields of Europe, became the Golgotha of the world. O prejudice! thou fell monster of despair, are ages yet unborn to feel the effect of thy poisonous influence! The same prejudices of education, founded the inquisitorial court, invented the rack and torture, and the auto-da-fe to complete the destruction of the surviving sufferer.

Not only the living are taken from the summit of hap-

piness, and plunged in the abyss of death, but the sacred repository of the dead has been violated; the bones of a Wickliffe have been taken from the silent shade of the grave, and consigned to the fire, approximating nearer to everlasting, than the horrid perpetrators of the foul deed approximated to the ineffable purity of that God, whom they hypocritically worship. The effects of prejudice introduced by education can be traced in lines of blood, from the most ancient era to the present date, and all this is effected by the artful and designing, while the populace are dupes to their artifices.

"Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
But ne'er looks forward further than his nose."

The fatal effects of a prejudicial education are plainly seen throughout the world. A man, habituated to follow the traditions and prejudices of his ancestors, would generally follow the same track, whether strait or crooked; being educated in Rome, he would acknowledge the papal supremacy; in Thibet, he would worship the grand Lama; in Hindostan, he would adore the Ganges, and join the pilgrims of Jugernaut; in Africa, he would be awed into obedience by the Kollah; in Turkey, he would bow with reverence to the impostor Mahomet; in China, he would burn incense on the altar consecrated to Confucius; and can we look back to the sixteenth century, and trace the christian nations to the present date, without discovering the fatal effects of prejudice? What except prejudice induced the Church of England, to persecute the dissenters, to drive them to distant and inhospitable climes, to refuse them that assistance, which true charity and christian benevolence could not refuse? What except prejudice, caused the banishment of Roger Williams and his associates? The same principle was discoverable during the persecution of the sect called Quakers; the persecutors, under the cloak of religion, professed to be protestants, while in reality they were sincere devotees to the doctrine of "come not near me, for I am holier than thou." Does this sound like the language of the martyr Stephen?—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." What except those prejudices borrowed from heathen mythology, induces mankind to publish and proclaim as their platform, or articles of faith, words like these, "some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are fore-ordained to everlasting death;" &c. "neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only; the rest of mankind, God was pleased to pass by, and ordain them to wrath." Surely those who advocate this doctrine, must have forgotten, or never believed the declaration of the Psalmist, "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." How careful are mankind in the present age, to prejudice the youthful understanding in favour of a doctrine, which, the devotees themselves acknowledge never afforded a moment's comfort. Scarce a month passes, without tracts, pamphlets or catechisms, being distributed, gratis. But the monster prejudice is gradually on the decline, its tottering BABEL requires extraordinary support, and the glad tidings will ere long be proclaimed, Dagon the God of the Philistines is shivered in pieces, it cannot stand before the ark of God!

CEPHAS.

Charlton, Aug. 1, 1824.

We have admitted the above piece, in compliance with the request of a friend, although we are conscious it is not written in a good style, but because we approved many of the sentiments, and hoped the writer might thereby be induced to improve.

AN EXTRACT.

How many clear marks of benevolent intention appear every where around us! What a profusion of beauty and

ornament is poured forth on the face of nature! What a magnificent spectacle presented to the view of man! What supply contrived for his wants! What a variety of objects set before him, to gratify his senses, to employ his understanding, to entertain his imagination, to cheer and gladden his heart?

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, August 21, 1824.

DEBATE ON UNIVERSALISM.

We have received the first number of the minutes of the controversy between the Rev. Mr. Kneeland and the Rev. Mr. M'Calla, from the pen of Mr. Jennings, one of the stenographers present during the debate. From this report of the discussion we hoped to learn the strong reasons on which the advocates of endless misery rest their belief, but we have little idea of being gratified, if the first number be a fair specimen of their reasoning. The point at issue was, "Is the punishment of the wicked absolutely eternal, or is it only a temporal punishment, in this world, for their good, and to be succeeded by eternal happiness after death?" Mr. M'Calla opened the discussion, by stating very properly the importance of the subject in dispute, the lawfulness of public debate on religion, and that there was no necessity for the introduction of human passions. After this appropriate beginning, from which we might expect much fair and forcible reasoning, he defines the wicked in question to be those who shall never be saved, and who, consequently, must suffer a punishment absolutely eternal. Without attempting to show that any will remain wicked forever and suffer everlasting punishment, he contents himself with asserting, that all are wicked in a certain sense, but that by the wicked in question he means those who live and die wicked, and who have never obtained the pardoning grace of Jesus Christ. It then belonged to him to prove that any lived and died who are not wicked. But this he did not attempt. Having made these statements, which he supports neither by scripture, reason, nor analogy, he goes on to remark on Mr. Kneeland's creed and the different classes of Universalists, their resemblance of Arians, Unitarians and Destructionists, the doctrine of Mr. Kneeland's Lectures, its agreement with the sentiments of the ancient philosophers, and its tendency to produce suicide, as Zeno, if he did not mistake, killed himself in consequence of disbelieving in a future state. In the last place, he contends that Mr. Kneeland's doctrine will send the inhabitants of the old world, the men of Sodom, and the traitor Judas to heaven, before Noah, Lot and Christ, and that consequently the wicked are blessed, and the righteous punished. Mr. Kneeland in reply admits the importance of the question, grants that it has been fairly stated, but expresses astonishment that nothing has been done to support the positive side of the case. He then shows from the scriptures that all are wicked, and infers, that if all the wicked must suffer a punishment absolutely eternal, none can be saved. Mr. Kneeland then proceeds to say, that when a person is condemned, he must be sentenced according to the law he has broken, and that when his opponent will bring the law of God which denounces eternal punishment, and prove that any have violated its requirements, so as to incur its penalty, he will give up his point, and consider the debate finished; but that, until this is done, he cannot yield to the desultory observations of his antagonist. Mr. Kneeland then brings forward the law of God published to Adam, shows that its penalty was not endless punishment, that it denounced death on the day of transgression, and that God was not slack concerning his promise, but inflicted the penalty soon as the crime was committed, and inflicted it in full, without reserving any thing for eternity. He then goes over the case of Cain, the old world and Sodom in the same manner, and shows

that no law of heaven threatened them with endless punishment, and that if they suffered it, it must be without law, or from one unrevealed, which they could never break, as they never knew what it was. In close, he says all the blessings promised and curses threatened to the Jewish nation are recorded in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, and the 28th of Deuteronomy, and that in them there is no mention of any punishment in a future world. Without intending to give a formal analysis of this number, or to prejudge the case before we have the other arguments, we have thought it necessary to say what we have on the subject, that the solicitude of our readers might in some degree be removed, and that they might be prepared to judge of the merits of the discussion. We would observe however, that what has been exhibited furnishes a good specimen of the reasoning on each side through this pamphlet; that Mr. M'Calla only repeats the ideas already mentioned, in other forms; animadverts on Mr. Kneeland's Lectures; accuses him of disbelieving the scriptures—because he quoted Dr. Lardner, and approved his sentiments; cites passages of scripture which are irrelevant to the subject in dispute; calls some hard names; repeats some trite remarks, and occasionally seems offended. That Mr. Kneeland adheres to his first position; calls on his opponent to bring forward the law of God requiring the endless punishment of the wicked; declares he shall never yield the point, that all the family of man will be pure and happy, until he is convinced of its falsity by scripture and reason; and entreats him not to consume the time and weary the patience of their auditors, by remarks that do not affect the question at issue.

We understand from the "Franklin Gazette" that Mr. M'Calla calls Mr. Jennings' pamphlet a spurious publication, and that he proposes to publish his own argument in full, as he says no person can do it for him. To these remarks Mr. Jennings has replied, vindicating his impartiality, and the correctness of his memoranda. We now leave this subject, expecting to resume it in a future number.

DEDICATION AND INSTALLATION.

On Wednesday last was Dedicated the new, elegant and convenient Universalist Church in this City.—The following were the services on the occasion.

Reading select portions of Scripture by Br. JOSHUA FLAGG, of Dana, (Mass.)

Introductory prayer by Br. JOHN BISBE, Jr. pastor elect.

Dedicatory prayer by Br. EDWARD MITCHELL, of New York.

Sermon by Br. HOSEA BALLOU, of Boston, text Haggai ii. 6, 7.

Concluding prayer by Br. DAVID PICKERING, of Providence, (R. I.)

The services were conducted with harmony and ability, indicating the strength of the cause, and the sincerity of brotherly feeling.

The music was appropriate and impressive, creditable to the teacher and the performers, and soothing and pleasant to the feelings of the auditors. May the house long be filled with devout and constant worshipers, their numbers and graces increase, till they shall be translated to the temple of Heaven.—Br. MITCHELL, preached in the evening.

On the following day (Thursday,) Br. EISBE, was In-

stalled, on which occasion the services were in the following order :

Introductory prayer by BR. NEHEMIAH DODGE, of New-London, (Ct.)

Sermon by BR. DAVID PICKERING, text Acts v. 20.

Installing prayer by BR. JOSHUA FLAGG.

Delivery of the Scriptures and Charge, by BR. BALLOU.

Right Hand of Fellowship, by BR. FLAGG.

Concluding prayer by BR. THOMAS F. KING, of Norwalk, (Ct.)

The services and music were peculiarly appropriate and affecting on each day, and the listening auditors seemed to feel that they were attending to the words of everlasting life. May much good result from this opportunity of hearing God's universal grace stated and defended, and many weeping and unbelieving souls be made to rejoice.—Br. King preached in the evening.

FRANKLIN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSALISTS.

Notice is hereby given, that the Franklin Association will meet, agreeably to adjournment, at Bernardstown, (Ms.) on the third Wednesday in October next. All the brethren in the ministry who can make it convenient, are requested to attend. Any request to have the Association convene at some other place the ensuing year, should be forwarded to the present session.

JOHN BROOKS, Clerk.

Bernardstown, August 2, 1824.

NEW PUBLICATION.

We have received the first number of the "CHRISTIAN TELESCOPE," a weekly paper, printed at Providence, (R. I.) and conducted by BR. DAVID PICKERING. We hope each future number may breathe the kind and christian spirit, which characterises the first, and that it may deserve and receive constant and gratifying patronage.

ORIGINAL ANECDOTE.

Not long since, a *real* orthodox brother, who is famous for neglecting his business at home, and attending every church, lecture, conference, &c.—(who by the bye, is not as mighty in the scriptures, as the superficial observer might imagine, judging from the great bustle he makes in meeting,) was advised by a Universalist to read his Bible more, instead of going to meeting so much; to which our brother replied:—"I wish I could hear my minister preach oftener, for I find that all those who read the Bible for themselves become Universalists!"

IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE EDUCATION.

Who is it that moulds and directs the characters of our boys, for the first ten or twelve decisive years of their life? Not their father; for such are his engagements, or such the reserve and stateliness of his manners, that his sons but rarely come in contact with him. No; it is in her affectionate bosom and on her lap, that the blossoms of the heart and mind begin their bloom; it is she, who bends the twig, and thus decides the character of the tree. How then ought she to be accomplished, for this important office! How wide and diversified her reading and information! How numerous the historic models of great men, with which her memory should be stored! How grand and noble the tone of her own character!

[SELECTED.]

THE WIFE'S ADIEU.

I soar to the realms of the bright and the blest,
Where the mourners are solaced, the weary at rest,
I rise to my glories while thou must remain—
In this dark vale of tears, to dejection and pain.

And hence, though my heart throbs exultant to die,
And visions of glory expand to mine eye,
The bosom that struggles and pants to be free,
Still beats with regret and affection for thee.

I fear not another, more fond and more fair,
When I am forgotten, thy fortunes should share;
O! find but a bosom devoted as mine,
And my heart's latest blessing forever be thine!

I fear lest the stroke, that now rends us apart,
From the faith of the Christian should sever thy heart;
Lest, seeking in anguish relief from despair,
The vain world should lure thee to look for it there.

But O! should it tempt thee awhile to resign
A treasure so precious, a hope so divine;
Should the light of His glory be hidden from thee,
In the hour of thy darkness, O think upon me!

Remember the hope, that enlivens me now,
Though the dews of the grave are damp on my brow;
The faith, that has nerve me with transport to see
The hour of my doom, though it tears me from thee!

ANECDOTE.

Rev. Mr. _____, in preaching in Oakham recently, where several Furnaces are located, told his audience that their Furnaces could give them but a faint idea of Hell; take a man (said he,) out of hell and put him in one of those Furnaces, and he would soon die of ague fits.—*Magazine.*

JUST RECEIVED,

AND FOR SALE AT THIS OFFICE.

The first number of the Theological Discussion on the Question

"Is the punishment of the wicked absolutely eternal? or is it only a temporal punishment in this world, for their good, and to be succeeded by eternal happiness after death?"

Between REV. ABNER KNEELAND and W. L. MC CALLA.

Which commenced at the First Independent Church of Christ, called Universalist, in Lombard Street, Philadelphia, on Tuesday morning, July 13th, and concluded on the evening of Friday following. Taken in short-hand, by R. L. JENNINGS.

The work will contain about 250 pages, close matter octavo, and will be divided into six numbers, at 25 cents each, to be paid on delivery, or the whole in boards, at \$1.50.

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